

Minutes of Public Works Committee

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

Present: Rob Crowner (Chair), Steve Braun, Charlie Moran, Michael Cann, Guilford Mooring, Don George, Vince O'Connor.

Minutes from previous meeting were approved: 5-0-1

Next meeting set for Tuesday, August 4.

There was a brief discussion of the impact of looming budget cuts on the DPW. Guilford says he is losing the position of tree foreman for sure, but beyond that no other personnel cuts are anticipated. He notes things could still change in Town Meeting.

Old business

The Atkin's Corner road/rotary 100% plan is going through approvals. Some minor modifications of sidewalk width expected. Vince notes that Town Meeting has already approved easements and land takings. Only Mrs. Ives' property could be developed, theoretically, but the property is owned by Hampshire College and is leased on long-term basis.

Pelham Road work: Guilford says no work being done now because of other department priorities, but may be done later in the season.

Vince reported on the site visit for Sand Hill Rd. Attending: Select board member Diana Stein; 2 planning board members, 4-5 shade tree committee members, a UMass planner, and an abutter on sand hill rd. The group walked from location to location and discussed the issue that widening the road to standard width would require cutting many healthy trees.

Vince reported that the Shade Tree Committee has recommended that trees be preserved, though the ultimate decision is with the Tree Warden. Vince says it looks as though there is general

support for a waiver of the need to widen the road from existing 20 ft. to the town standard of 24 ft. for that type of road. The PWC will see and review designs once the width issues are resolved.

Motion: that the Public Works Committee recommend to the Select Board that a waiver for Sand Hill Rd. be granted in order to preserve the shade trees. Motion approved 6-0. Rob will draft letter to this effect and transmit to the SB.

Charlie advocates that PWC members support the existing capital budget in upcoming town meeting.

New Business

The Select Board has asked the PWC to review sidewalk snowplowing policy and whether it's possible to plow all town sidewalks as opposed only the selected sidewalks that are cleared currently. There is no formal policy for sidewalk clearing. The town is legally obligated to clear sidewalks that it owns, such as those around the common, adjacent to schools and town buildings, and adjacent to town-owned parks. The town also informally plows sidewalks that connect areas it has to plow anyway. But there have been complaints that some people's sidewalks are plowed and some not.

Charlie suggested that the town only plow routes needed by school kids. Guilford noted that if you draw a 1-mile radius around every school (i.e. the area within which bus service is not offered) then you would end up plowing practically every sidewalk in town. Guilford said that he currently has the personnel and equipment to do the current list, but not more. He noted that it's difficult to generate a cost-per-mile estimate for sidewalks because of complications of men and machines (i.e. some sidewalks require hand-shoveling, which takes more manpower and time).

The Committee asked Guilford to research other town policies regarding sidewalk clearing. The Committee will defer any decisions about recommendations until it gets more information.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Braun, Sec'y pro tem.